

Oconee County Library Board Meeting
January 11, 2021
4:30 p.m.
Oconee County Civic Center

The following members of the Board were present:

Mark Campbell
Deanna Craft
Fred Lutz
Soraia Santos-Felgenhauer
Jon Kirkpatrick
Rubielen Norris
Laura French
Mike Eddy
Mandy Marable
Rachel Watson
Angela Moss-Hill

Athens Regional Library System members were also present, including:

Ms. Val Bell
Mr. James Mitchell
Ms. Donna Butler
Ms. Jean Mead

Mr. Campbell advised attendees there would be no public comments due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and welcomed the public to utilize the Board's dedicated email to make their voices heard. The Board's email is oconeeboard@gmail.com for interested individuals to email the Oconee County Library Board of Trustees.

Mr. Mitchell provided a report regarding the Oconee Library. Ms. Butler provided a report regarding the Bogart Library. Ms. Bell updated the Board on current operations due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mr. Campbell turned to the discussion and presentations regarding the location of the Oconee County Library. He recounted the history of the library, the need for a new facility, and the July 2019 proposal from Oconee County to house the new Oconee Library in the County's planned administrative building. The Board previously approved locating the library in the Oconee County administrative building.

Oconee County Chairman Daniell provided a presentation regarding the County's proposal. Chairman Daniell noted that the County has supported the libraries in Oconee County for decades. The State of Georgia funding will be approximately \$1.9 million, the County will contribute \$1.2 million, which affords the Board \$3.1M to spend on the new location. Chairman Daniell expressed the Commission's intent to continue its cash support of the library, as well as

maintenance and operations support. He also stated there would be no punitive financial losses to the library if the Wire Park location is chosen. Chairman Daniell encouraged the Board to view the decision as a generational decision and a fiscal decision.

Duke Gibbs, developer of Wire Park, presented his proposal to the Board. He outlined his vision of Wire Park, and encouraged the Board to imagine the library as a vital part of the project.

Brian Brodrick and Christine Tucker, both of the Watkinsville City Council, made a presentation to the Board in support of Wire Park. They emphasized the live-work aspect of the Wire Park location.

Chairman Campbell thanked Chairman Daniell, Mr. Gibbs, Mr. Brodrick, and Ms. Tucker for their presentations. He stated the Board would have a called meeting to discuss and vote on the library location.

Ms. Bell asked the Board to consider two items:

1. Student card waiver of fines: the library system is partnering with the school system to link student cards with library cards. Part of the agreement is that the library must waive all late fines. Upon motion by Ms. Norris, seconded by Ms. Moss-Hill, the Board unanimously approved waiving fines for students using their student cards for library services.
2. Print management system: the Bogart and Oconee libraries are in need of a new print management system. The current system is obsolete. Ms. Bell has a proposal for the Board's consideration. She asked the Board review the proposal and take the item up for a vote at its next meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.


Mark Campbell, Chairman

Laura French, Secretary

Oconee County Library Board of Trustees Called Meeting
January 25, 2021
4:30 pm

The Oconee County Library Board of Trustees held a called meeting on January 25, 2021. Prior to the meeting a public zoom link was provided, as well as a dedicated Gmail email account whereby citizens could submit their comments to the Board prior to the meeting.

The following members of the Board were present:
Jon Kirkpatrick, Mark Campbell, Laura French, Angela Moss-Hill, Daphne Norton, Mandy Marable, Rubielen Norris, Mike Eddy, Fred Lutz, Deann Croft, Rachel Watson, Soraia Santos-Felgenhauer, and Chairman Mark Campbell.

The following members of the Library System were present:
James Mitchell, Val Bell, and Amy Harden.

Lee Becker also attended via Zoom.

Chairman Campbell opened the called meeting and thanked everyone for attending. The first item on the agenda is the Discussion of the new location for the Oconee Library.

Ms. Norris thanked Chairman Campbell for his leadership, and the Committee for its diligent work over the last several weeks. Ms. Norris asked for each person to review the agenda, noting that this will be an Oconee County Library, not a Watkinsville Library. She reminded the Board that it is to serve all residents of the county. She also expressed her concerns about traffic, parking, housing units, retail spaces, restaurants and bars in the area of Wire Park. She believes the county location is better suited for the library. Ms. Norris says that the county location contains much more green space than Wire Park. She also stated that the use of green space at Wire Park would be common rather than dedicated to the library. Ms. Norris told the Board she is concerned about safety, parking, and funding. Her vote is for the county location.

Ms. Watson spoke next, stating that she agrees with Ms. Norris. As a library patron, she isn't particularly interested in all the other Wire Park offerings, and is concerned the push for Wire Park is little more than a marketing campaign. Ms. Watson expressed consideration for what the library and Wire Park will look like 5-10 years down the road. She believes that the library will be in a better position to resolve any disagreements or problems with the county, rather than the privately held Wire Park.

Mr. Campbell noted for the Board that he, along with the following members, served on the facilities committee: Ms. Norris, Mr. Eddy, Ms. French, and Mr. Kilpatrick.

Mr. Eddy spoke, noting that Wire Park is going to be a community hub. He stated that the vast majority of emails are in favor of the Wire Park location. He agrees there are financial concerns, as well as transportation issues. On balance, given the community's expressed support of Wire Park, he is in favor of Wire Park as the library location.

Mr. Kirkpatrick concurred with Mr. Eddy, remarking that the public comments are overwhelmingly in favor of Wire Park. He thanked the citizens for taking their time to contact the Board. He highlighted some of the comments, including one from the Friends of the Oconee County Library. Mr. Kirkpatrick believes the value proposition of a 25,000 sq. ft. building at Wire Park is better for the library in the long-term. He believes that the library board will be visionary in choosing Wire Park.

Mr. Lutz spoke and said that he had visited both sites, initially preferring the county location because of congestion in the Watkinsville corridor. He is concerned about child safety, backup power, and the details of the public-private partnership. Mr. Lutz said he would not second-guess the public support for Wire Park, and would vote in favor of Wire Park as the new location for the library.

Ms. French spoke, reminding the Board that she had voted against moving to the county government building in 2019. She stated that she had never liked the idea of the library being in a government center; that while libraries are public, and funded by taxpayers, most patrons don't necessarily associate the library with the government. Ms. French also said she agreed with the concerns around safety, the public-private partnership, and traffic with the Wire Park location. Ms. French told the Board she was dismayed the public discussion has framed the choice as "Watkinsville versus the County," and that the Board has been put in the position of making the choice. Ms. French echoed Mr. Lutz' remarks about public support, noting the emails were 10 to 1 in favor of Wire Park. As the Board is in the business of literacy and education, and in light of the public support for Wire Park, Ms. French will vote for Wire Park.

Mr. Campbell asked if there were any more items for discussion. Hearing none, the Board voted as follows:

Mr. Eddy made a motion to locate the library at Wire Park. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lutz.

The following Board members voted in favor of the motion:

Mr. Kirkpatrick, Ms. French, Ms. Moss-Hill, Ms. Norton, Ms. Marable, Ms. Croft, Mr. Eddy, Ms. Santos-Felgenhauer, and Mr. Lutz.

The following Board members voted against the motion: Ms. Norris and Ms. Watson.

The motion to locate the Oconee County Library at Wire Park passed by a vote of 9 in favor and 2 against, with 1 abstention.

Mr. Lutz made a motion to recommend the Wire Park location include the following features: (1) backup electric power; (2) 40 dedicated parking spots during library hours; (3) library control of its meeting rooms; (4) child safety measures such as lighting and security cameras; (5) ongoing participation in the Wire Park partnership as necessary to support the mission of the library. Mr. Kirkpatrick seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved Mr. Lutz' motion.

Ms. Bell and Mr. Mitchell asked the Board to consider the library needs for a new print management system. The Board previously reviewed management's request and the financials. Upon motion by Mr. Lutz, seconded by Mr. Eddy, the Board unanimously approved the print

management system for both library locations, with costs and expenses to be paid in advance rather than financed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



Mark Campbell, Chairman

Laura French, Secretary

Oconee County Library Board of Trustees

April 12, 2021

The Oconee County Library Board of Trustees held its regular quarterly meeting on Monday, May 12, 2021 at 4:30p.m. at the Bogart Library. The following members were present: Chair Mark Campbell, Vice-Chair Rubielen Norris, Donna Craft, Mike Eddy, Jonathan Kirkpatrick, Fred Lutz, Mandy Marable, Daphne Norton and Rachel Watson.

The following members of the Library System were present: Valerie Bell, Toby Mayfield, James Mitchell and Donna Butler.

Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 4:40 p.m. and thanked everyone for attending. Minutes from the January 11, 2021 meeting held at the Oconee County Civic Center were reviewed and amended to add Daphne Norton as in attendance followed by a motion by Mike Eddy and seconded by Jon Kirkpatrick. The vote was unanimous to approve as amended. Minutes of the January 25, 2021 Called Meeting were approved by a motion made by Fred Lutz and seconded by Daphne Norton with a unanimous vote to approve.

There were no public comments.

James Mitchell presented the Branch Manager's Report as follows: The Library has changed its quarantine time from 7 days to 3 days. Oconee Public School Students can now access public library e-books through their school SORA accounts giving more students access to our materials. Bogart had a large number of diapers and other supplies donated during its "Community Drives". These items are donated to ACTS. Virtual Programming continues for all ages and grab and go crafts also continue to be popular for all ages. The Library in partnership with Oconee Parks launched its first Storywalk program. The library also partnered with Keep Oconee Beautiful, Athens Seed Company and the Extension Office to offer free seeds and to promote gardening. Molly Moore resigned from Bogart and Thomas Stein was hired at Oconee.

Valerie Bell presented the Regional Services Report as follows: good news is the State Legislature approved .40 per capita for material funding. Executive orders extended state of emergency until April 30, 2021, at that time mandatory mask eliminated (cannot require mask) in counties except Clarke. Mask will be requested but not required. The Library will be open by May 17th with no longer quarantine of books. On March 2nd, 6 Dr Seuss books were requested to be pulled off the shelves because of racial content. After reviewing the books they will remain in the library in reference area where a request is needed to see them. Val then introduced Toby Mayfield, a new employee at the Regional office. The annual management fee each year for the new Print Management will be \$2,222.00.

Chairman Campbell stated that he would like to have the library open as much as possible. He suggested to Val Bell that anything the board could do to help get that done, please let us know.

The Watkinsville Friends of the Library report was given by James Mitchell as follows: the February sale was cancelled. Plans are being made to hold the annual book sale in September and considering

holding it for two weekends. Because of storage space they cannot accept any more donated books at this time.

Donna Butler reported that the Bogart Friends have opened their book store.

Chairman Campbell reported that a MOU with Oconee County for the new library to be located in Watkinsville are being reviewed by the Region and that an address for Wire Park is needed. An agreement between Watkinsville and Oconee County will allow for a check to be written by July 1, from Watkinsville Council for Capital funds. The agreement will be in place for 20 years and will be named the Oconee County Library not the Watkinsville Library. The Location Committee will remain the same individuals and the Architect will be one that designs libraries.

Val Bell added that last week was National Library Week and that each branch received a proclamation.

Fred Lutz asks that a letter with specifications for the building be sent to Oconee County and Watkinsville. Chairman Campbell agreed and will make that happen.

Mandy Marable ask if the present library when vacated would go back to the county. Chairman Campbell stated that Oconee County owns the building and it will go back to them.

Chairman Campbell explained that a new budget will go into effect on July 1, 2021 and needs approval before the next board meeting in July. A motion was made by Rubielen Norris to adopt the 2022 Budget which will be the same as the 2021 Budget with changes possible at the July regular board meeting. It was seconded by Mike Eddy with a unanimous vote to accept.

The next regular Board Meeting will be on July 12, 2021 at Bogart Library at 4:30p.m. A motion to adjourn was made by Mike Eddy seconded by Fred Lutz and received a unanimous vote to accept.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Campbell", is written over a horizontal line.

Mark Campbell, Chairman

Laura French, Secretary

Oconee County Library Board Meeting
Minutes for July 12, 2021
4:30 p.m.
Bogart Library

The following members of the Board were present: Chairman Mark Campbell; Vice-Chairperson Rubielen Nörris, Secretary Laura French, Fred Lutz, Angela Moss-Hill, Jonathan Kirkpatrick, Deanna Craft, Rachel Watson, Mike Eddy, Daphne Norton. Members absent from the meeting included: Soraia Santos-Felgenhauer, Mandy Marable.

Oconee County Library and Athens Regional Library System members were also present, including Valerie Bell, Toby Mayfield, and Donna Butler.

Upon motion by Mr. Lutz, seconded by Mr. Eddy, the minutes of the April 2021 meeting were approved, with one correction to the spelling of Ms. Craft's name.

Ms. Mayfield gave a report to the Board regarding region operations. A copy of the written report "2021 July Librarian's Report to Library Board" was given to all Board members.

Ms. Butler provided a report to the Board regarding library programming and usage. The community's use of the library is increasing, well beyond 2020 numbers, but is still below 2019 figures. A few in-person events for children have been held outside. Summer reading club is in full swing. The library has begun in-person events for teenagers and adults. Social distancing can be maintained due to the numbers of patrons participating.

Ms. Bell advised that September is Library month, and several celebrations and events will be held. The internet speed at the libraries will be increased soon due to a change in the local internet provider.

The Friends of the Library are open and operating a few days each week. The Friends have also begun a guest author lecture series. The Oconee Friends are doing pop-up book sales and will have a full sale in September.

Chairman Campbell provided a report to the Board regarding the Wire Park Oconee Library location. Proposals are open for architects to submit their suggestions and ideas to the library system. Eight firms submitted proposals to the Board for review and consideration. Mr. Campbell is pleased with the response from interested firms and looks forward to the committee and the Board's full review. Ms. Norris and Mr. Eddy attended the opening of the proposals. Ms. Bell advised that the City of Watkinsville has given its capital contribution of \$60,000 to the Oconee Library. The funds are earmarked and reserved for use on the new Oconee Library at Wire Park.

Chairman Campbell presented a report to the Board regarding the book entitled Silence is My Mother Tongue by the author Sulaiman Addonia. A comprehensive written report and

summary of the book were provided to the Board for review and consideration. The Library Bill of Rights was reviewed. The recommendation of the Intellectual Freedom Committee is to maintain the book in the Adult Fiction section. Mr. Eddy thanked Mr. Mitchell for his comprehensive report, noting that while book topics and themes may be difficult and disturbing, it is the duty and responsibility of libraries to afford access and education to such materials. Upon recommendation of the Intellectual Freedom Committee, seconded by Ms. French, the Board unanimously approved maintaining the book in question in the Adult Fiction section of the library.

Chairman Campbell reviewed the budget for FY2022. A written budget was provided to the Board. Although revenues have been less than anticipated, Chairman Campbell noted that management and staff have done a great job of minimizing expenses. There are revenues available that can be moved into the reserve fund. Ms. Bell has recommended that the Board consider moving \$41,746.30 into the reserve fund for use on future library needs.

Chairman Campbell also advised the Board that the Oconee County Board of Commissioners increased its library funding by 2% over FY2021 levels.

Mr. Eddy raised the issues of employee compensation and library fines. The Board and management discussed salary levels especially considering the current employment environment. Libraries are generally moving to a “no fine” rule due to the library’s mission of public service. Mr. Eddy asked management to provide an analysis to the Board of market comparables, as well as the impact on the overall budget of raising salaries within the Oconee Library System.

Ms. Norris inquired about the reduction in the “books and AV materials” budget line item. There is potential that the Friends may be able to assist with this budgetary item. Ms. Butler suggested that with the library circulation numbers down, it may be reasonable to reduce expenditures for books and AV materials this year. The librarians observe that patrons continue to use curbside pickup as well as holds, rather than browsing in the library facilities.

Mr. Lutz inquired about the “programming incentives” line item.

Ms. Norris made a motion to approve the FY2022 budget as amended. Her motion was seconded by Mr. Kirkpatrick, and unanimously approved by the Board.

Chairman Campbell advised the Board that it was in order to consider Covid relief supplemental compensation for Oconee Library system employees in the amount of \$1,000 per employee. Upon motion by Mr. Eddy, seconded by Ms. Norton, the Board unanimously approved the supplemental compensation.

Mr. Eddy raised the question of the October 2021 Board meeting. Ms. French noted that the October meeting falls on October 11, which is Columbus Day. Ms. Butler advised the Board that the libraries are busier on school holidays. A suggested alternate date is October 18, 2021

at 4:30 pm on the Bogart branch. Ms. Norris made a motion that the October 2021 Board meeting be held on October 18, 2021; such motion was seconded by Ms. Moss-Hill, and passed by the Board unanimously.

Chairman of the Board of Commissioners John Daniell visited the Board. He thanked the members for their work on behalf of the citizens of Oconee County.

There being no further business, upon motion by Ms. Watson, seconded by Ms. Norton, the meeting adjourned at 5:44 p.m.


Mark Campbell, Chairman

Laura French, Secretary

Oconee County Library Board Meeting
Minutes for October 18, 2021
4:30 p.m.
Bogart Library

The following members of the Board were present: Chairman Mark Campbell, Vice-Chairperson Rubielen Norris, Secretary Laura French (via remote access), Fred Lutz, Angela Moss-Hill, Jonathan Kirkpatrick, Deann Craft, Rachel Watson, Mike Eddy, Daphne Norton, and Matt Stephens.

Chairman Campbell introduced Mr. Matt Stephens, and welcomed Mr. Stephens to the Board. Mr. Stephens was recently appointed to the Board of Trustees as a representative from the Oconee County Board of Education.

Oconee County Library and Athens Regional Library System members were also present, including James Mitchell, Valerie Bell, Toby Mayfield, and Donna Butler.

Upon motion by Mr. Eddy, seconded by Ms. Norris the minutes of the July 2021 meeting were approved, with one correction to the spelling of Ms. Craft's name.

There were no public comments at the meeting.

The Branch Manager's report was provided by Mr. Mitchell. Children's programming has resumed at the library, and in our local preschools. Teen programs have received a great response from the community. The teen programs are also being held in the schools, and the library is working on a program to be held at the civic center. For our adult constituents, the library has hosted hiking programs, blood drives, and created a new partnership with The Landing, senior living facility. Programs are being held outside, where possible.

September was National Library Card sign up month. Local businesses supported the program by providing prizes and discounts for patrons who showed their library cards at the local business.

Evelyn Knauff at the Watkinsville branch has retired. Mr. Mitchell and the Board expressed appreciation for her many years of service to the community. The position has been redesigned into a full-time circulation manager. The branch has hired Jessica Simpson, a former part-time library employee to fill the circulation manager position.

Mr. Mitchell also provided a circulation report. He has added further breakdowns into the types of materials to the circulation report.

The regional report was provided by Ms. Mayfield. She is meeting with the branch managers monthly, as well as attending the local board meetings. Ms. Mayfield has revamped the branch highlights reports to provide more patron stories and comments.

The Oconee Friends of the Library sale was held in September 2021. The sale is comparable to the September 2019 sales numbers. The Friends have so many books as well as community demand that they intend to hold a large sale in February 2022 at the civic center. Mr. Mitchell noted that the Friends' sales provide tremendous resources to the libraries. Ms. Norris took the opportunity to commend and offer her thanks to the Oconee Friends. She noted their work was extraordinary, especially following the pandemic. Chairman Campbell echoed Ms. Norris' sentiments.

The Bogart Friends are hosting an author per month. Trunk-or-Treat will be hosted by the Bogart Friends. This event is held on October 31, 2021 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Ms. Butler let the Board know the library would be open during the Trunk-or-Treat.

Chairman Campbell provided a report to the Board regarding the RFPs submitted for the architectural component of the new Oconee County Library. Within the total of eight submissions, the committee reduced the candidates to a total of four. The committee spent two full days interviewing candidates. The committee selected Ponder & Ponder as the architects for the Oconee County Library to be located at Wire Park. Chairman Campbell expects to have more design information at the January 2022 meeting. A conceptual design will be submitted within the next 8 weeks or so, but the Chairman does not have a precise timeline. He intends for the process to include community involvement and public review and comment. The local, regional, and state library systems have asked the legislature for an additional \$900,000 due to increasing construction costs. Chairman Campbell encouraged the Board to express the importance of the new facility to the Georgia legislature.

Ms. Bell let the Board know that the Athens Regional Board will meet this week. The regional board will accept RFPs for a new strategic plan. Mr. Lutz has volunteered to represent the Board of Trustees on this strategic planning committee. Upon motion by Mr. Eddy, seconded by Ms. Norris, Mr. Lutz was unanimously selected to serve as the Board of Trustees representative on the regional strategic planning committee.

Chairman Campbell opened a discussion on the Board's Bylaws. Ms. Bell advised the Bylaws do not currently provide for members to attend Board meetings via virtual means and be included in the attendance count for quorum purposes.

Ms. Bell advised the Board there is a state best practices standard requiring the Constitution and Bylaws be reviewed every 2 years. Chairman Campbell wishes to form an ad hoc committee to review the Constitution, Bylaws, and provide a report back to the Board in January 2022. He mentioned the Board may wish to review the following items: add a Treasurer position; review the standard meeting dates and times; and consider remote attendance bylaw provisions. Ms. French volunteered to be part of this committee.

Copies of all reports were included in the Board packet for the members' review.

The next Board meeting will be held on Monday, January 10, 2022 at 4:30 p.m. at the Oconee Library. There being no further business, upon motion by Mr. Eddy, seconded by Ms. Marable, the meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.



Mark Campbell, Chairman

Laura French, Secretary